

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CITIZENS INITIATIVES (CI'S) IN THE FRG

REF: A) BONN 6620; B) HAMBURG 501

SUMMARY. RECENT ELECTORAL SUCCESSES WILL NOT LEAD TO A GREEN PARTY IN THE FRG. CI'S HAVE DEEP PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS IN GERMAN HISTORY AND HAVE BEEN ACTIVE SINCE THE MID-60'S. QUALITY OF LIFE AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY ARE IMPORTANT CI GOALS. THE ANTI-NUCLEAR CONTROVERSY HAS BECOME THE KEY CI ISSUE. THE CI'S WILL BE PART OF THE FRG'S POLITICAL SCENE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RECENT ELECTORAL SUCCESS OF "GREEN LIST" CANDIDATES IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN HAMBURG AND LOWER SAXONY, AND THE BBU'S RECENT CONGRESS IN KASSEL HAVE GENERATED A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST IN CI'S IN THE FRG AND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CI'S POLITICAL MEANING.

2. THE CI'S RAN "GREEN LIST" CANDIDATES IN ONLY TWO OF THE FIFTEEN COMMUNAL ELECTORAL DISTRICTS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN. THE "GREEN LIST" CANDIDATES WON 6.6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE STEINBURG DISTRICT AND 6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE NORDFRIESLAND DISTRICT. BOTH DISTRICTS INCLUDE PLANNED NUCLEAR POWER PLANT SITES, AND IN SOME TOWNS NEAR THE SITES THE "GREEN LIST" VOTE WAS OVER 20 PERCENT. THE CI'S HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN THESE AREAS, AND THESE ELECTORAL SUCCESSES SHOW THAT THE "GREEN LISTS" CAN BE EFFECTIVE GRASS-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ROOTS POLITICIANS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL, AND CAN OPERATE AS SUCCESSFUL, ISSUE-ORIENTED PROTEST CANDIDATES WHO CAN GET OVER THE 5 PERCENT VOTE HURDLE. POLITICAL OBSERVERS WERE STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT THE "GREEN LISTS" ALSO ATTRACTED PROTEST VOTES FROM NORMAL CDU SUPPORTERS.

3. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, PRINCIPAL BBU LEADERS HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE FORMATION OF A "GREEN PARTY" (REF A). THESE LEADERS ALSO DO NOT EXPECT ANY MAJOR ELECTORAL SUCCESSES IN HAMBURG OR LOWER SAXONY. THE MOST THAT COULD BE HOPED FOR UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCE WOULD BE THE ELECTION OF A FEW "GREEN LIST" REPRESENTATIVES TO THE STATE PARLIAMENTS. BBU LEADERS CANDIDLY STATE THAT EVEN IF ELECTED, A FEW "GREEN LISTS" WOULD BE UNABLE TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT POLICY, PARTICULARLY IN THE NUCLEAR AREA. SO, FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, THE BBU WILL CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF ENCOURAGING BBU MEMBERS TO INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL PARTIES AND UNIONS FROM WITHIN.

4. THE FOREIGN PRESS HAS BECOME INTERESTED IN CI'S IN

THE FRG AS A RESULT OF THE WORK OF THE ANTI-NUCLEAR
CI'S. THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OCCUPATION AT WYHL AND THE
DEMONSTRATIONS AT BROKDORF DIRECTED AGAINST PROPOSED
NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS WERE MAJOR NEWS EVENTS IN THE FRG
AND ELSEWHERE. IN MANY CASES, HOWEVER, THE COVERAGE
SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT CI'S ARE A RECENT PHENOMENA IN THE
FRG. THEY ARE NOT.

5. CI LEADERS AND THEORISTS TRACE THEIR POLITICAL AND

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PHILOSOPHICAL GOALS BACK TO THE PEASANTS' REVOLTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, AND THE 1848 UPRISINGS. MORE RECENTLY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE STUDENT MOVEMENTS AND THE EXPERIENCES OF THE 1960'S HAVE INFLUENCED THE LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CI'S.

6. ONE MAJOR PROBLEM IN ANALYZING CI'S IS THAT NO ONE TO DATE HAS PRESENTED A GENERALLY ACCEPTED DEFINITION OF WHAT A CI IS. WHILE THE CI'S ARE MOST OFTEN DESCRIBED AS ENVIRONMENTALISTS, WHICH, IN TURN, LEADS TO TERMS LIKE "GREEN PARTY," THE ENVIRONMENT IS ONLY PART OF A LARGER MOVEMENT THAT IS BROADLY CONCERNED WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CI'S IN THE PAST FEW YEARS-HAVE BEEN GROUPS IN THE MAJOR CITIES DEALING WITH URBAN PROBLEMS, AND NOT FLOWER CHILDREN GOING BACK TO THE LAND. MANY OF THESE CI'S BEGAN AS AD HOC GROUPS OF CITIZENS WHO CAME TOGETHER TO SOLVE A LOCAL PROBLEM THAT OFTEN WAS CAUSED BY A GOVERNMENTAL ACTION SUCH AS BUILDING AN AIRPORT NEARBY OR REZONING OR RAZING A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT OR INACTION, SUCH AS NOT PROVIDING PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS OR ADEQUATE GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES. MOST OF THESE GROUPS INTENDED TO DISAPPEAR AS SOON AS THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM WAS SOLVED. GENERAL PROBLEMS AND THE CI'S HAVE REMAINED, HOWEVER.

7. AS CI LEADERS GAINED EXPERIENCE, THEY MET OTHER CI LEADERS, REFINED AND/OR CHANGED THEIR GOALS AND REMAINED IN THE MOVEMENT. SOME CI'S DID DISAPPEAR, BUT THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED IN THEM DID NOT. THESE PEOPLE HAVE PROVIDED A RESERVOIR OF TALENT FOR THE CI'S. THIS NEW WAVE OF CI LEADERS IN AND AROUND THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDES THE POLITICAL SKILLS COUPLED WITH CONCRETE ISSUES THAT MOBILIZE THIS RESERVE OF TALENT. CI'S TODAY ARE A WIDE RANGE OF LOCALLY AUTO-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS, RANGING IN SIZE FROM A FEW MEMBERS TO THOUSANDS, WITH A WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS, OFTEN LOCAL BUT NOT ALWAYS. THEY HAVE BANDED TOGETHER TO FORM UMBRELLA COALITIONS WHO CAN SPEAK GENERALLY

ABOUT THE OTHER CI'S WHEN DEALING WITH THE PRESS, PARTIES, UNIONS AND GOVERNMENT, IF THIS IS USEFUL AND TACTICALLY CORRECT AT THE MOMENT IN QUESTION. THE CI'S ARE OPEN INFORMAL STRUCTURES THAT DEPEND UPON A CORE OF PEOPLE WHO PROVIDE CONTINUITY AND LEADERSHIP. THIS OPEN STRUCTURE IS WHY ESTIMATES OF CI MEMBERSHIP VARY. MEMBERSHIP GROWS AROUND THESE LEADERS WHEN THERE IS AN ISSUE, AND DROPS WHEN THINGS ARE QUIET. MOST OF THE CI LEADERS HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ONE OR THE OTHER OF THE TWO MAJOR UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS, THE BUNDES-VERBAND BUEGERINITIATIVEN UMWELTSCHUTZ--BBU AND THE BUND FUER LEBENSSCHUTZ. THESE GROUPS ARE THE BEST KNOWN SPOKESMEN FOR THE CI AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS. THE BBU HAS RECEIVED MORE PUBLICITY WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

8. BEING A CI MEMBER IS NOT AN EXCLUSIVE THING. ONCE THE BASIC CI PREMISE OF "HE WHO WORKS IS A MEMBER" IS ACCEPTED, IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE A BBU MEMBER, A MEMBER OF A POLITICAL PARTY AND A MEMBER OF A CHURCH--ALL AT THE SAME TIME. IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT JOINING A POLITICAL PARTY IN THE FRG, WHICH LESS THAN 5 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION DOES, IS LIKE JOINING A CHURCH IN THE US--IT IS A SERIOUS COMMITMENT AND A PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIAL POLITICAL GOALS. JOINING A CI IS NOT. IN FACT, MEMBERSHIP IN CERTAIN CI'S IS QUITE ACCEPTABLE--EVEN CHIC--FOR SOME MIDDLE TO UPPER CLASS GERMANS, PARTICULARLY ANTI-TRAFFIC NOISE CI'S, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CI'S, AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION CI'S.

9. THE CI'S INFORMAL STRUCTURE HAS FOUND A STRONG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GRASS-ROOTS RESPONSE IN THE FRG WHERE THINGS HAVE BEEN DONE BY THE GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL PARTIES, UNIONS OR PRIVATE ASSOCIATIONS. THESE GROUPS SOMETIMES ARE IN CONFLICT, BUT OFTEN IN CONSULTATION WITH ONE ANOTHER, SINCE, BY THEIR OWN DEFINITION, THEY REPRESENT THE MAJOR GROUPS AND INTERESTS IN THE FRG--ENTREPRENEURS, INDUSTRY, LABOR, AND THE PEOPLE. THESE GROUPS ARE "LEGITIMATE," LEGAL, DEFINABLE, USED TO DEALING WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND OFTEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE GRASS-ROOTS--I.E., EVERYTHING THE CI'S ARE NOT, ACCORDING TO SOME SOURCES. PART OF THE ONGOING DEBATE ABOUT CI'S HAS THEREFORE FOCUSED ON THEIR OVERALL "LEGITIMACY" TO PURSUE THEIR GOALS, AND IN COURT CASES ON THE NARROW

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ISSUE OF WHETHER CI'S HAVE STANDING TO SUE. THIS DEBATE

ABOUT LEGITIMACY CONTINUES, EVEN THOUGH THE CI'S FIND

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IT A CONTINUING IRRITANT ON THE ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER, AN EXAMPLE OF HOW POLITICALLY OUT OF TOUCH SOME CI OPPONENTS REALLY ARE.

10. PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE CI'S WERE INVOLVED IN THE FRG STUDENT MOVEMENT IN THE 1960'S. THIS MOVEMENT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THE "EARLY" AND "LATE" PERIODS. THE "EARLY 60'S" GROUP WAS INFLUENCED BY THE "FRANKFURT SCHOOL" OF MAX HORKHEIMER, THEODOR ADORNO AND HERBERT MARCUSE, AND WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN TESTING EXPERIMENTAL, ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN FORMS OF CHILD REARING AND EDUCATION WHICH LED TO STOREFRONT KINDERGARTENS AND COMMUNAL FORMS OF LIVING. THE 1966-67 ECONOMIC RECESSION AND THE GRAND COALITION BETWEEN THE CDU/CSU AND SPD FORMED THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE "EARLY 60'S" AND THE "LATE 60'S" GROUPS, EVEN THOUGH A NUMBER OF THE SAME PEOPLE WERE IN BOTH GROUPS. THE "AUSSERPARLAMENTARISCHE OPPOSITION," THE NON-PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION GROUPS, DEVELOPED IN THIS PERIOD SINCE THEY FELT THAT EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION WAS IMPOSSIBLE GIVEN AN CDU/CSU-SPD ALLIANCE. VIET NAM, UNIVERSITY UNREST, AND THE NON-PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION MOVEMENT LED TO THE STUDENT UNREST OF THE LATE 1960'S. THE "LATE 60'S" GROUP WAS INTERESTED IN AN OVERALL REFORM OF THE SOCIETY AND CAN GENERALLY BE COMPARED TO THE STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN THE US. THE PEOPLE IN THIS GROUP HAVE DRIFTED INTO ACADEMIA, POLITICS, THE GOVERNMENT, AND IN A VERY FEW CASES, TERRORISM. THE CI'S HAVE MANY MEMBERS NOW WHO WERE STUDENTS DURING THE LATE 1960'S, AND WHILE THESE CI MEMBERS WERE NOT LEADING THE "LATE 60'S" GROUP, THEIR DECISION TO WORK IN CI'S HAS BEEN DEEPLY INFLUENCED BY THE DISCUSSIONS ON DIRECT DEMOCRACY, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND OVERALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOCIETAL GOALS THAT OCCURRED DURING THE LATE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970'S.

11. ONE MAJOR TARGET OF THE CI'S IS THE CIVIL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION, WHICH, IN THE VIEW OF SOME COMMENTATORS, LIVES BY THE STATEMENT "CONSTITUTIONAL LAW CHANGES, ADMINISTRATIVE LAW REMAINS THE SAME," AND WHICH ACTS ACCORDINGLY IN CARRYING OUT LAWS. THERE HAS BEEN A TRADITION OF ALMOST A TRUSTEESHIP TOWARD THE PEOPLE IN THE GERMAN CIVIL SERVICE WHICH CAN LEAD TO THE FOLLOWING REASONING PROCESS:

-- A PROJECT, SAY URBAN RENEWAL, IS NECESSARY. HOUSING IS SUBSTANDARD.

-- MORE OFFICE SPACE IS NECESSARY FOR THE WHOLE CITY.

OFFICE SPACE IN HIGH RISE BUILDINGS IS MOST ECONOMIC AND SALEABLE.

-- WE WILL TEAR DOWN HOUSES AND PUT UP OFFICE BUILDINGS.

IF THIS PLAN MEETS CITIZEN RESISTANCE, THE FIRST RESPONSE BY THE OFFICIALS IS OFTEN THAT THE CITIZENS HAVE NOT BEEN PROPERLY INFORMED. IF THE CITIZENS CONTINUE TO OBJECT AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN "INFORMED," THEN THE CITIZENS ARE ACCUSED OF BEING PAROCHIAL AND PUTTING THEIR SELFISH INTERESTS ABOVE THE OVERALL GOOD.

12. WHAT IS FINALLY BEING REALIZED IN THE FRG, IS THAT WHILE THERE MAY BE AN INFORMATION PROBLEM BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND CITIZENS, THERE ARE ALSO BASIC DIFFERENCES OF VALUES. PEOPLE ARE ALSO FINDING THE SOMETIMES PATERNAL AND ARBITRARY ACTIONS AND STYLE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE UNACCEPTABLE. THIS HAS BECOME A GROWING POLITICAL ISSUE, PERHAPS CONTRIBUTING MORE TO THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF CI'S THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE FACTOR.

12. SOME LAWS DO PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PRO-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSED PROJECTS, BUT BY AND LARGE THESE HEARINGS HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE. IN MANY CASES, THE CI'S HAVE APPROACHED THE POLITICAL PARTIES OR UNDERTAKEN POLITICAL ACTION AS A LAST RESORT AFTER BEING FRUSTRATED BY ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS MADE BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

13. THE ANTI-NUCLEAR ISSUE HAS RECENTLY BECOME THE DOMINATING CAUSE AMONG THE CI'S IN THE FRG. THE CI'S ARE OPPOSING THE WHOLE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY, ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUAL GROUPS GENERALLY CONCENTRATE ON A PARTICULAR PROPOSED NUCLEAR POWER PLANT OR PROJECT, SUCH AS THE PROPOSED REPROCESSING CENTER IN GORLEBEN. CERTAIN BBU LEADERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROMINENCE OF THE

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ANTI-NUCLEAR ISSUE SINCE THIS MAY DRAW SUPPORT AWAY
FROM TRAFFIC PLANNING AND URBAN PRESERVATION CI'S AND
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ALIENATE THE LARGER PUBLIC. THESE BBU LEADERS DO NOT
WANT TO SEE THE MOVEMENT DEGENERATE INTO A ONE-ISSUE
MOVEMENT, EVEN IF AN ANTI-NUCLEAR STANCE WOULD BRING
SHORT-TERM POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL SUCCESSES. BBU
LEADERS WANT A "BALANCED" DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC AWARE-
NESS AND SUPPORT ON A BROAD SPECTRUM OF "QUALITY OF
LIFE" ISSUES.

14. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE BBU AND THE CI MOVEMENT IS
HERE TO STAY AS PART OF THE FRG'S POLITICAL SCENE FOR
THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. POLITICAL COMMENTATORS AND THE

MEDIA ARE LIKELY TO CLAIM MAJOR SUCCESSES OR DEFEATS FOR THE CI'S, AND THESE CLAIMS WILL BE BASED WHOLLY ON THE LATEST ELECTORAL RESULTS. THIS WILL BE A MAJOR MISTAKE BECAUSE ELECTORAL RESULTS WILL ONLY BE A PART OF THE STORY. THE CI'S ARE GOOD GRASS-ROOTS POLITICIANS WITH A RESILIENT, DECENTRALIZED ORGANIZATION THAT OPERATES SUCCESSFULLY ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET. THE CI'S AND THEIR ATTORNEYS WILL USE COURT CASES AND INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS. THE CI'S ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY AND WILL USE THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY AND THE ARGUMENTS OF PRIVATE US SCIENTISTS IN COURT CASES IN THE FRG. FURTHER REPORTS WILL FOLLOW. STOESEL

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